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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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EXAMINER

CLEVELAND, MICHAEL B

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

1762

DATE MAILED: 09/28/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/730,041

Applicant(s)

RAINA, KANWAL K.

Examiner

Michael Cleveland

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 09 December 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 24-38 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 24-38 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 09 December 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 120903_020805
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 24, 26, 30-31, 33, and 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Neukermans (U.S. Patent 5,658,710, hereafter '710) in view of Cathey et al. (U.S. Patent 5,853,492, hereafter '492) and Miyamoto (U.S. Patent 5,747,384, hereafter '384).

Claim 24: '710 teaches a method of treating an array of silicon current emitters comprising:

a) exposing a native oxide-containing tip of the current emitters to a native oxide removal process (col. 3, lines 17-20), and

b) exposing the tip current emitter tips to a nitrogen infusion process.

'710 does not explicitly teach A) that the emitters are used in a flat display panel, nor B) that the tips are exposed to a plasma hydrogenation process in the presence of silane.

However, '710 does teach that the emitter tips may be used as an array (col. 3, lines 23-25). '492 teaches that silicon emitter tips (col. 2, lines 63-65) may be used in flat panel displays (col. 1, lines 22-25) and may possess native oxide coatings that decrease efficiencies of the emitters when coated with other materials (col. 1, lines 35-57). '492 teaches the efficiency may be improved by removing native oxide coatings may be removed by hydrogen termination (col. 2, lines 27-47). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have removed any native oxide from the silicon emitter tip of '710 before applying the coating to reduce the amount of energy necessary to operate the tip (as taught by '492, col. 1, lines 35-57). '710 and '492 do not explicitly teach removing the native oxide coating by treating with a silane gas.

'384 teaches that native oxides may be removed from silicon by plasma treatment including hydrogen and silane (col. 5, lines 31-35, col. 10, lines 44-54). Therefore, it would

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have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have removed any native oxide from the silicon emitter tips of '710 by the plasma hydrogenation method of '384 instead of the HF method of '492 with a reasonable expectation of success and with the expectation of similar results because '384 teaches that such treatment also removes native oxides from silicon.

Claims 26 and 35: The nitrogen treatment may take place with ammonia ('710, col. 5, lines 35-41).

Claim 30: The process may be practiced on a plurality of current emitters ('710, col. 3, lines 21-25; '492, Fig. 1).

Claim 31: The emitters are sealed inside a field emission display (FED) device ('492, col. 3, line 60-col. 4, line 3).

Claim 33: The focus of '384 (Examples) on the process variables such as gas flow rates, suggests that the flow rates of the materials are result-effective variables. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have chosen the optimum pressure, RF power, and silane flow rate through routine experimentation.

3. Claims 25 and 32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Neukermans '710 in view of Cathey '492, Miyamoto '384, as applied to claim 24, and further in view of Shimbo (U.S. Patent 4,624,737, hereafter '737).

Claims 3, 11: '710, '492, and '384 are described above, but do not explicitly teach that the treatment with silane and the nitridation occur in the same chamber.

'737 teaches that consecutive plasma deposition processes may be performed in the same chamber (col. 2, lines 24-33). '737 does not clearly explain the advantage of such a feature, although it does hint at the advantage of reducing contamination (col. 2, lines 33-36). However, it is very well known in the vapor deposition art that performing successive steps in the same chamber reduces the number of processing steps (and thus the manufacturing cost) and reduces the opportunity for contamination. (See references cited in conclusion for evidence of these assertions.) Thus, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have performed the two plasma CVD processes in the same chamber in

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order to have reduced the risk of contamination and to have reduced the number of process steps with a reasonable expectation of success.

4. Claims 27 and 33-35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Neukermans '710 in view of Cathey '492, Miyamoto '384, as applied to claim 24, and further in view of Maa (U.S. Patent 4,411,734, hereafter '734).

'710, '492, and '384 are discussed above, but do not explicitly teach that the tips are exposed to a plasma hydrogenation process in the presence of silane with a flow rate of about 1200 sccm, an RF power of about 200-300 W, a pressure of about 1.2 torr, and a period of about 5-10 minutes

The focus of '384 (Examples) on the process variables such as pressure, gas flow rates, and RF powers suggests that the flow rates of the materials are result-effective variables. Maa '734 likewise indicates that the power, pressure, and time are result-effective variables during the plasma cleaning of native oxides (col. 2, line 66-col. 3, line 10). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have chosen the optimum pressure, RF power, and silane flow rate through routine experimentation.

5. Claims 27-28 and 33-36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Neukermans '710 in view of Cathey '492, Miyamoto '384, Maa '734, as applied to claim 27 above, and further in view of Iyer et al. (U.S. Patent 5,917,213, hereafter '213).

'710, '492, '384, and '734 are described above, but do not explicitly teach the nitridation occurs with an ammonia flow rate of 500 sccm, an RF power of about 300-400 W, a chamber pressure of 1200 mtorr, and a period of about 10-15 minutes.

'213 teaches that during plasma treatment of silicon, particularly the plasma nitridation of silicon surfaces, the pressure, gas flow rate, power, and time are chosen to achieve the desired results (col. 5, lines 59-col. 6, line 19). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have optimized the pressure, gas flow rate, power, and time in order to have achieved the desired results because '213 teaches that they are the process parameters that are manipulated by those of ordinary skill in the art to achieve results.

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6. Claim 29 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Neukermans '710 in view of Cathey '492, and Miyamoto '384, as applied to claim 24, and further in view of Doan et al. (U.S. Patent 5,186,670, hereafter '670).

Claim 8: '710, '492, and '384 are described above. '492 teaches that the emitter includes a base portion surround by an insulator (106) (See Fig. 1, col. 1, lines 9-20), but the references do not that the emitter may extend beyond the insulator. The selection of something based on its known suitability for its intended use has been held to support a *prima facie* case of obviousness. *Sinclair & Carroll Co. v. Interchemical Corp.*, 325 U.S. 327, 65 USPQ 297 (1945). See MPEP 2144.07. '670 demonstrates that the suitability of configurations in which the emitter may extend beyond the insulator (See Fig. 2 of '670). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have performed the process of '710, '492, and '384 on emitters that protrude from an insulating layer because '670 demonstrate that such is an operative configuration of electron emissive arrays.

7. Claim 37 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Neukermans '710 in view of Cathey '492 and Miyamoto '384, as applied to claim 24 above and further in view of Shimbo '737 for substantially the same reasons discussed above regarding claim 25 and Maa '734 for substantially the same reasons discussed above regarding claim 27.

8. Claims 37-38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Neukermans '710 in view of Cathey '492, Miyamoto '384, Maa '734, and Shimbo '737, as applied to claim 37, and further in view of Iyer '213 for substantially the same reasons discussed above regarding claim 28.

Double Patenting

9. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686

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F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

10. ~ Claims 24-38 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1, 3, 5, 7-11, and 24-27 of U.S. Patent No. 10/120511. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because they merely represent different combinations and permutations of the various claimed features.

Conclusion


11. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Togashi et al. (U.S. Patent 4,642,620, col. 17, lines 60-68) and Levine et al. (U.S. Patent 5,989,999, col. 3, lines 39-48) are cited for their teachings regarding successive processing steps occurring within the same chamber. Sandhu (U.S. Patent 5,888,906) is cited for its teachings regarding removing native oxides from silicon using silane (col. 5, lines 3-8) and the performance of subsequent steps without handling (col. 4, lines 1-6).

12. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michael Cleveland whose telephone number is (571) 272-1418. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday, 7-5:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Timothy Meeks can be reached on (571) 272-1423. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Michael Cleveland
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1762

9/23/2005